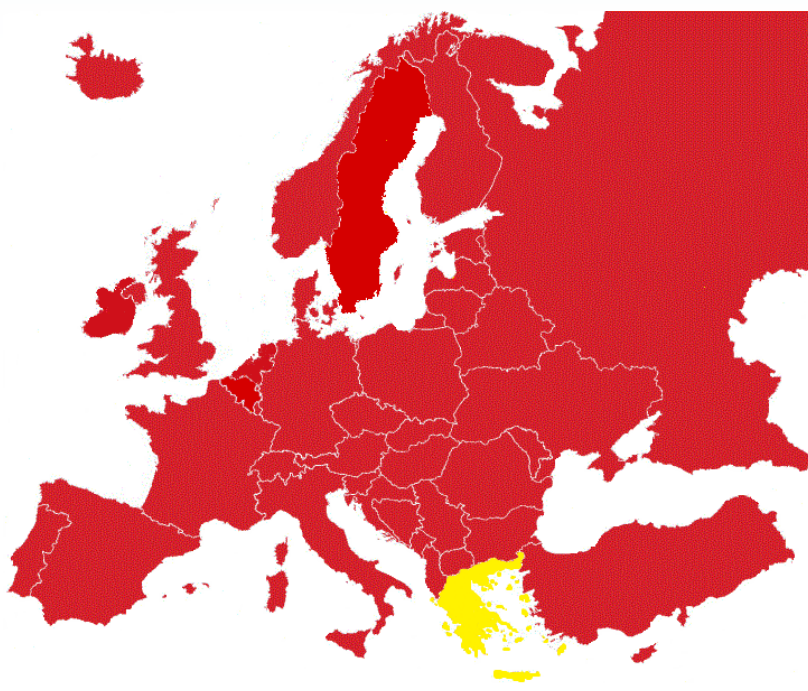
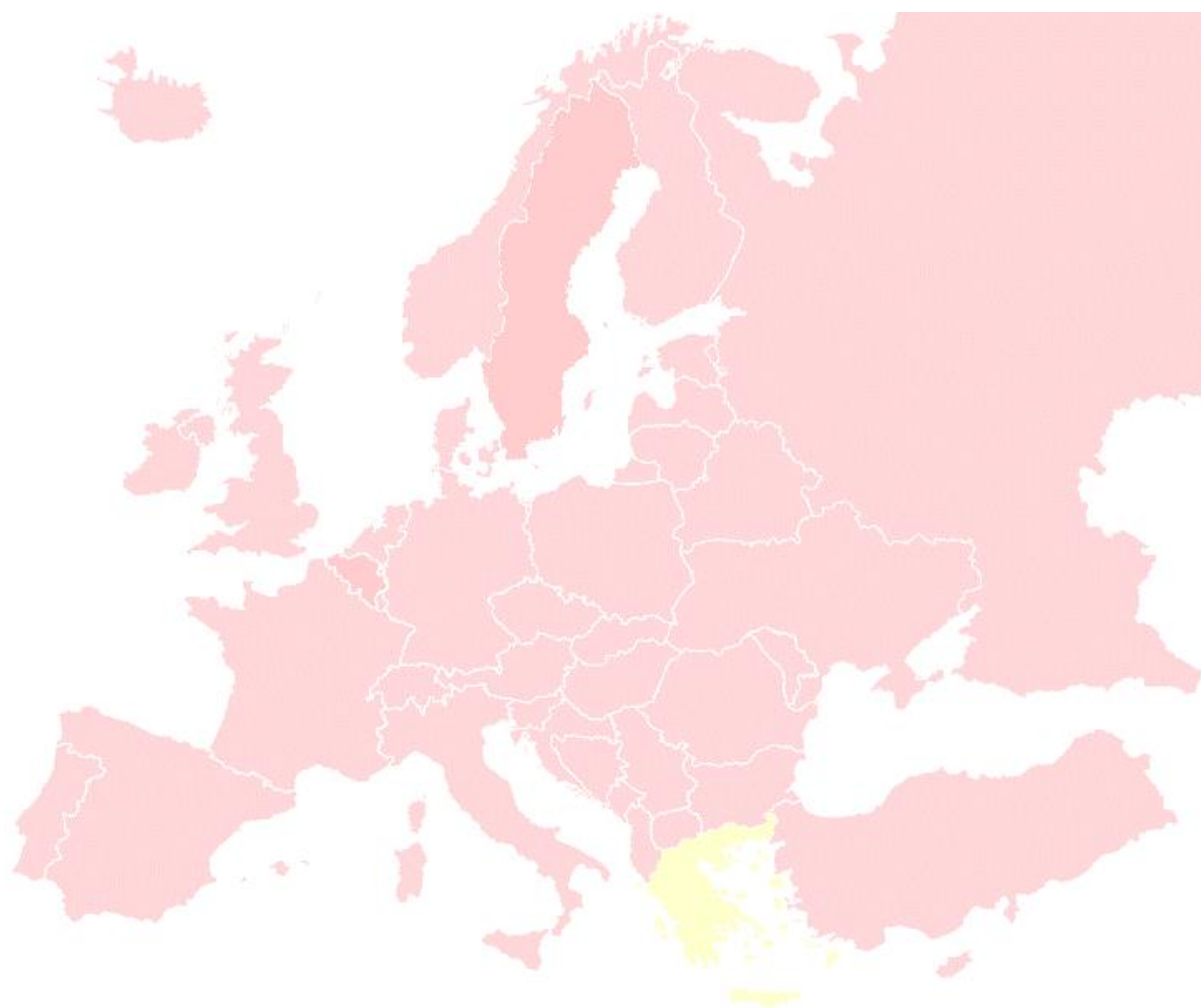




# PEER REVIEW ON HOMELESSNESS POLICIES IN ATHENS CITY (GREECE)

**HABITACT  
PEER REVIEW  
2014**





# HABITACT PEER REVIEW 2014

Athens city, 10-11 April 2014



## PEER REVIEW on Homelessness Policies in Athens Discussion Paper

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### Acknowledgements

This Review was commissioned by HABITACT, the European exchange forum on local homeless strategies and was launched, with the support of FEANTSA, in June 2009 by a core group of cities to develop European cooperation between local social policy administrations on tackling homelessness. For more information see: [www.habitact.eu](http://www.habitact.eu)

I would like to thank Jenny Varvayanni and Ioanna Pertsinidou for their help with gathering the material and providing their feedback on this report.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                      |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1 Introduction</b>                                                                                                | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2 EU context: the development of homelessness policies in a period of economic crisis and financial austerity</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3 Homelessness in Greece</b>                                                                                      | <b>7</b>  |
| 3.1 Definitions of homelessness and services                                                                         | 7         |
| 3.2 Recent trends in homelessness                                                                                    | 8         |
| <b>4 Athens homelessness policy and service provision model</b>                                                      | <b>11</b> |
| 4.1 Key players and services                                                                                         | 11        |
| 4.2 Mobilising funding and support                                                                                   | 17        |
| 4.3 Next steps                                                                                                       | 19        |
| <b>5 The Athens model in comparative European perspective</b>                                                        | <b>21</b> |
| 5.1 Who provides homelessness services                                                                               | 21        |
| 5.2 Homelessness services: funding, regulation and competition                                                       | 22        |
| 5.3 Service co-ordination and interprofessional working                                                              | 22        |
| <b>6 Effectiveness of homelessness policy and service provision</b>                                                  | <b>23</b> |
| 6.1 Approaches to intervention                                                                                       | 23        |
| 6.2 Homelessness prevention                                                                                          | 25        |
| 6.3 Empowering service users to move out of homelessness                                                             | 25        |
| 6.4 Evaluating effectiveness of outcomes                                                                             | 26        |
| 6.5 Service quality and standards                                                                                    | 26        |
| <b>7 Questions for peer review</b>                                                                                   | <b>27</b> |
| <b>8 Conclusions</b>                                                                                                 | <b>28</b> |
| <b>9. References</b>                                                                                                 | <b>29</b> |

**Annex : ETHOS – European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion**

## 1. Introduction

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This paper reviews homelessness policies and service provision in the city of Athens, Greece, in the context of wider European developments and potential comparisons with other European cities. This is the fifth in a series of peer reviews of city homelessness policies in Europe, mediated through the HABITACT European Exchange Forum on local homelessness strategies. The city of Athens presents a valuable case study of policy responses developed to deal with the impact of severe economic crisis on homelessness. Drawing on an earlier review of homelessness policies and service provision in Europe (Anderson, 2010), the conceptual approach of examining policies which support pathways out of homelessness, and prevent homelessness from occurring, is adopted to structure the analysis.

The discussion paper begins by setting the context of responses to homelessness at the European level. It then examines homelessness in relation to the Greek national context, before providing an overview of key elements of homelessness policy and service provision in Athens city with a view to characterising the Athens model. The detailed case study of homelessness policy in Athens is then compared with the wider research evidence base across other European countries in order to identify potential for transferability of elements of the Athens model to other local contexts. The discussion paper concludes by formulating key questions about the Athens model for consideration in the peer review meeting.

## 2. Eu context : the development of homelessness policies in a period of economic crisis and financial austerity

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The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen increasing recognition of the problem of homelessness in the European Union. Homelessness became a priority as part of EU anti-poverty policies under the Europe 2020 strategy. While the immediate responsibility for homelessness lies with EU Member States, as recently as January 2014, MEPs called for a European strategy on homelessness focusing on housing, cross-border homelessness, quality of service provision and homelessness prevention.

While the Europe 2020 growth and jobs strategy was agreed with politically and legally binding targets to be achieved by 2020 (including poverty reduction), the EU also responded to the crisis by reinforcing economic policy coordination and surveillance to achieve earlier detection and correction of harmful fiscal and macroeconomic trends than in the past. Mechanisms include monitoring housing markets, e.g. for any new risk of a housing bubble, yearly trends in house prices, reducing volatility, and fostering rental markets. The new challenges facing EU countries call for a rethink of the EU's approach to social policies and a number of recent initiatives have relevance for the development of homelessness policies and service provision. The Commission has outlined policies and recent initiatives to support increased 'social investment', including benefits and services that improve people's skills and capabilities and support people's inclusion in society in its latest *Social Europe* guide (European Commission, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See here [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/crisis/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/crisis/index_en.htm)



The European Social Fund (ESF) regulation now also makes reference to homelessness, potentially opening up funding opportunities for homelessness organisations during 2014-20 (HABITACT, 2013). Further, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can be used to finance housing, social and health infrastructure which promote community-based action to support social inclusion, as well as investments in 'physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities'. A regulation for the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) for the period 2014-2020 was formally adopted in March 2014, allowing national authorities to decide on priorities for FEAD operational programmes. FEAD is potentially useful for emergency interventions tackling homelessness, such as starter packs to help people move out of homelessness and into accommodation. Co-financing rates for FEAD interventions will be 85% and 95% for Troika programme countries (which includes Greece), and goods have to be provided free of charge to beneficiaries.<sup>2</sup>

The EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), will support Member States' efforts in the design and implementation of employment and social reforms at European, national, regional and local levels by means of policy coordination and the identification, analysis and sharing of best practices. EaSI integrates and extends the coverage of three existing programmes: Progress (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity); EURES (European Employment Services); and the [European Progress Microfinance Facility](#). The EaSI programme should provide further support for research and testing innovation in the field of homelessness (as has been done in the past with MPHASIS and Housing First Europe).<sup>3</sup>

The EU is to monitor homelessness policies through national social reports in 2014 (due for submission by 30 April). These should include: implementing strategies to prevent, confront and measure homelessness; improving quality of and access to social, health and other targeted services for homeless people; improving access to adequate, affordable housing, including social housing; changes concerning measures and services to better prevent evictions/loss of permanent accommodation; and changes to housing benefit or support. These national social reports are to be linked to the content of the National Reform Programmes (also to be submitted in April) which highlight progress on the Europe2020 strategy targets, including the target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million. All countries must highlight their targeted social investments to reduce different forms of poverty, including homelessness.

To support Member State action, the European Commission published policy guidelines on homelessness in their Social Investment Package of February 2013. More than ten countries highlighted homelessness action as a priority in their 2013 national reform programmes, and the number of national homelessness strategies is on the increase (FEANTSA, 2013a). Moreover, a group of EU countries is developing informal cooperation on homelessness linked to the EU's social policy agenda (currently the social Open Method of Coordination or 'OMC'). Under the Irish Presidency of the EU, 23 countries agreed six key principles on homelessness to inform EU policy (Council, 2013). This cooperation may gather further momentum when Eurostat publishes EU-wide data on primary and secondary homelessness in June 2014 (Eurostat, 2014).

Within this context of homelessness policy development at EU level, the city of Athens reflects the response of a capital city in one of the EU Troika programme countries (Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Spain and Cyprus) which have received aid through the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF (Pisany-Ferry et al 2013). At the same time, Greece holds the six month EU presidency during the first half of 2014, with priorities driven by the duty to address the needs of citizens, including:

1. Growth, jobs, and cohesion
2. Further integration of the EU-Eurozone
3. Migration, borders, and mobility
4. Maritime priorities.

(Greek Presidency website and Programme, 2014).

The next section considers the nature of homelessness in Greece and the impact of the economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures.

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<sup>2</sup> ESF 2014-2020 regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0470:0486:EN:PDF>  
ERDF2020 regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0289:0302:EN:PDF>  
FEAD 2020 regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2014:072:0001:0041:EN:PDF>

<sup>3</sup> EaSI 2014-2020 regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0238:0252:EN:PDF>

### 3. Homelessness in Greece

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#### 3.1. Definitions of homelessness and services

As reported in previous peer review discussion papers, FEANTSA's ETHOS typology of homelessness identifies 13 operational categories of homelessness across four core categories of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing and inadequate housing (Edgar and Meert, 2005; Edgar, 2009) and services directed at improving people's housing circumstances could prove valuable in all situations (see ETHOS in Annex). Edgar (2009, p16) related homelessness to exclusion from the physical, social and legal domains of housing, but the economic domain (in terms of financial resources to access housing) emerged as a critical dimension of 'new homelessness' in Greece in the period of austerity following the 2008 financial crisis (Municipality of Athens, 2013; Theodorikakou *et al*, 2013).

Definitions of homelessness can be contrasted with the notion of being adequately housed in terms of appropriate physical shelter along with minimum standards to facilitate wider participation in society, such as:

- Reasonable choice (dwelling and neighbourhood)
- Reasonable standards (size, type, condition)
- Affordable costs (rent or rent allowance do not preclude employment)
- Reasonable security of tenure (medium to long term)
- Reasonable support services (for independent living and participation in civic society)
- Reasonable living income (from employment or state support)

(Anderson, 2010, p43; see also Article 11 of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966, cited in Kenna, 2005).

While homelessness can be a 'state' of lacking housing and other necessities, it is not an unchanging or permanent state. Dynamic approaches to understanding pathways into and through homelessness have been advocated by Anderson and Tulloch (2000), Anderson and Christian (2003) and Clapham (2003, 2005). A pathways approach recognises that housing and household circumstances change over the life course, and that economic and social circumstances may constrain or enable access to a suitable home, or indeed enforce loss of a home. While much homelessness research has focused on pathways out of homelessness, the recent experience of neo-homelessness in Greece is a stark reminder of how structural economic change can precipitate a sudden and dramatic negative housing trajectory, which households affected by sudden unemployment may have limited capacity to resist (Municipality of Athens, 2013; Theodorikakou *et al*, 2013). The notions of structure and agency (e.g. in Neale, 1997; Ratcliffe, 2004) aid analysis of homelessness policy development, in that there are structural constraints on what services are provided, by whom, and for whom; while the agency of those facing homelessness is reflected in their use of available services. This paper adopts the premise that services for homeless people should be focused on the needs of service users and should contribute to supporting pathways out of homelessness, or where possible to the prevention of homelessness.

Homelessness policies need to address the needs of those facing homelessness in relation to the extent of their housing crisis; the resources they have to resolve it; and any combination of other needs of the households, besides the need for housing. For those without basic accommodation and income, the provision of food, clothing, bathing and laundry facilities will be valuable. Resolving a housing crisis may require advice on how to negotiate access to accommodation and guidance on options available. Non-housing needs may require health services (physical, mental, addictions); social care services (though domiciliary care services are usually provided to 'a home'); income maximisation and employability services; and social or housing support services (Anderson, 2010). Homelessness prevention services have developed increasingly in the post-2000 period (Pawson, 2007; Anderson and Serpa, 2013), and in an ideal policy model, homelessness prevention through risk assessment and early intervention would be the first service available. Given the complexity of needs assessment and service delivery for homeless people, a wide range of agencies are often involved in service provision, with issues of co-ordination and inter-professional working often crucial to policy development and service effectiveness.

Typologies of homelessness service provision have been developed by Edgar *et al* (1999), Edgar (2009), and Busch-Geertsema *et al* (2010). Figure 1 shows a conceptual framework for comparative analysis which distinguished between emergency, transitional and long-term approaches to service provision. The model was useful in trying to summarise approaches but did not fully capture the diversity and complexity of potential responses.

**Figure 1: Conceptualisation of accommodation and services for homeless people**

| Approach              | Accommodation                                            | Services                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emergency/Crisis      | Traditional night shelters<br>Hostels for special groups | Advice/reception<br>Emergency facilities<br>Soup kitchens and clothes stores<br>Medical facilities |
| Transitional/Support  | Transitional housing<br>Supported Housing                | Social Support                                                                                     |
| Permanent/Integration | Ordinary Housing                                         | Training/employability                                                                             |

Adapted from Edgar *et al* 1999, p56.

Wolf and Edgar (2007) noted that classifications of services and support continued to distinguish between accommodation and non-accommodation services; and between emergency and resettlement services and some services were available to both housed and homeless people (e.g. addiction/mental health services). Homelessness policy development and service provision in the city of Athens can be compared against these typologies. Busch-Geertsema *et al* (2010) further updated the typology of services as shown in section 4 (Figure 3) in relation to contemporary service provision in Athens. The model of provision in Athens will reflect aspects of the national policy framework, as well as the specific approach adopted within the city.

### 3.2. Recent trends in homelessness

The 2011 population-housing census indicated Greece had a population of 10.8 million, with 49% male and 51% female (ELSTAT, 2013a). Greek nationals made up 91% of the population, with 1.8% from other EU countries, 6.5% from outside the EU and 0.04% with no citizenship (or not known/stated). The average household size was 2.6 persons. The severity of the impact of the international financial crisis on Greece is well illustrated through comparative poverty rates across the Eurozone at 2010. Figure 2 indicates the severity of the crisis on Ireland and the southern European countries, as well as the significant differences in poverty rates across the Eurozone.

**Figure 2: Eurozone Comparative Poverty Rates, 2010**

| Country     | Poverty rate<br>(% of population) |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ireland     | 29.9                              |
| Greece      | 27.7                              |
| Spain       | 25.5                              |
| Portugal    | 25.3                              |
| Italy       | 24.5                              |
| Cyprus      | 23.6                              |
| Estonia     | 21.7                              |
| Belgium     | 20.8                              |
| Malta       | 20.6                              |
| Slovakia    | 20.6                              |
| Germany     | 19.7                              |
| France      | 19.3                              |
| Slovenia    | 18.3                              |
| Luxembourg  | 17.1                              |
| Finland     | 16.9                              |
| Austria     | 16.6                              |
| Netherlands | 15.1                              |

Source: Population and Labour Market Statistics Division, "Living conditions in Greece", ELSTAT, January 2013.

The impact of the international financial crisis on Greek households is further illustrated by national statistics. For example the 2012 household budget survey showed average monthly expenditure down by 11% from the previous year and a high proportion of spending on basic items such as food, housing and, transport. The survey indicated a decrease in spending on leisure/luxury items and in the proportion of households with central heating, cars and second homes (ELSTAT, 2013b). The data also revealed significant income inequality with the richest 20% of the population having incomes six times those of the poorest 20% (ELSTAT, 2013b). Official living conditions indicators showed that material deprivation affected both poor and non-poor elements of the population (ELSTAT, 2013c). Households recording severe housing deprivation included 3.6% of those paying a mortgage; 6.3% of outright owners; 9.9% of tenants and 13.1% of those in some form of free accommodation (p2). Overcrowding was experienced by 26% of the total population and 39.4% of the poor population. Some 33.1% of the total population reported being overburdened with housing costs, but this was the case for 90.5% of poor households. Half of all poor people struggled with affording food and 55% had great difficulty in making ends meet. Some 40% of the total population reported a heavy burden of debt/loan repayment and 35.7% of the non-poor population experienced a heavy financial burden from total housing costs.



The problem of homelessness has been recognised in Greece since the 1990s, albeit with a lack of robust data collection or state policy responses (Stamatis, 2012; Theodorikakou et al, 2013). The changing nature of Greek society and the roles of family, especially women, meant that family solidarity could not be relied upon to deliver welfare as it had done in the past, contributing to the emergence of issues such as homelessness in the public domain. Key data on homelessness policy at the national level in Greece is documented in FEANTSA's (2012) Country Fiche (Information on Greece). While there is no regular official data-collection on homelessness in Greece, a 2009 study of homelessness conducted by the Ministry of Health reported a total of 7720 homeless people, excluding immigrants and travellers. This included an estimated 1,800 rough sleepers and 970 people in hostels and shelters. The accuracy of these figures has been the subject of debate in relation to methodological issues.

In alternative measures, the United Nations Human Rights Council reported 21,216 cases of people who lived, 'outside the home' in Greece and NGOs estimated 15,000 homeless people in the Attica region, which includes Athens, where homelessness is concentrated. Service providers have also estimated that the homeless population in Greece rose 25% between 2009 and 2011 to 20,000, as a result of the financial, economic and social crisis (Stamatis, 2012). Growing unemployment and falling income levels increased vulnerability to homelessness as more people were unable to meet housing costs. As the economic crisis worsened, the phenomenon of the "new homeless" was widely reported (Theodorikakou et al, 2013). This post-crisis increase in homelessness largely included people whose living situation had changed so dramatically they could no longer cover their housing and living costs. The profile of homelessness service clients changed from having fairly complex housing and health/social characteristics to households with recent work experience who did not present with complex needs beyond not being able to meet housing costs (FEANTSA, 2012). Migrants also faced increasingly severe housing situations. Despite a lack of robust statistical evidence, it appears that homelessness amongst immigrants has been a major issue in Greece, with policy responses and infrastructure inadequate to cope with increased levels of migration (Sapounakis 2009, 2011; Stamatis, 2012).

Austerity measures and cuts had a major impact on homelessness service capacity at a time of growing demand. While a right to housing is recognised in the Greek constitution, this is not legally enforceable and responsibility for aspects of homelessness policies lies with Government Ministries of the Environment, Health, Interior, and Citizen Protection, while Greece had no social housing stock (FEANTSA, 2012; Theodorikakou et al, 2013).

The economic crisis and subsequent dramatic rise in homelessness raised the issue on the policy agenda and the 2012 National Reform Programme established an inter-ministerial working group to address the rapidly deteriorating homelessness problem. A Committee on Homelessness (composed of stakeholders including ministries, academics and NGOs) was established in January 2012 with the aim of drafting a legislative proposal and an action plan. Subsequently Law 4052, 2012, set out a definition of homelessness which recognised vulnerability and the need for social protection, as well as recognising rooflessness, temporary accommodation and lack of access to adequate accommodation, for legal residents of Greece (Theodorikakou et al, 2013). As noted above, migrants are a significant group in Greece, given its location, and addressing their homelessness presents an additional challenge when the law refers only to those who have legal residence. Although procedures by which social protection could be delivered to Greek nationals facing homelessness were incorporated in law, these have not yet been fully implemented through clear national policy initiatives. Homelessness service providers report that a National Action Plan to combat homelessness in Greece, drafted by the same committee which introduced Law 4052, has not been implemented.

In further response to the crisis, two preventive policies were implemented in 2012 (Deputy Minister of Health, 2012, cited in FEANTSA, 2012): suspension of evictions for a six-month period in the event that the tenant has recently been made redundant and suspension of mortgage foreclosures where families had no other home to go to and no longer had the means to repay the mortgage. Stamatis (2012, p13) discusses how the impact of economic crisis lead to increasing costs of buying combined with arrears/debts, arguing that even with the freezing of seizures to prevent evictions, there remained a need for psycho-social support for those threatened with seizure at a later stage. Indeed, the freezing of seizures/auctions ended on 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2013.

As new governance structures came into place, local authorities started to become the operational units for many social services, including homelessness, albeit with new provisions in an early implementation phase around 2012. However, no national data was available on the *quality* of homelessness services in Greece (FEANTSA, 2012). With no specific national budget targeting homelessness in Greece, the national funding context worsened because of the crisis. The National Social Cohesion Fund was abolished and

housing benefit was suspended in 2010, partly because of the reduced inflow of social contributions which had funded the scheme. Cuts in public spending and social services severely hampered the capacity of support organisations. In February 2012, the Deputy Minister of Health announced funding for homeless services run by the municipalities of Athens and Salonika, with other programmes co-financed, for example, by the European Social Fund.

Positive policy developments in Greece have included the legal recognition of homelessness and the establishment of a Greek housing network to respond to the homelessness crisis. The Hellenic Network, consisting of 24 organisations dealing with homelessness in Greece, monitors the contextual changes and advocate for policy changes on homelessness. However, the continuing economic crisis and austerity measures meant that more people were at risk of homelessness and services were less well-equipped to respond. Homeless people could be excluded from receiving unemployment benefits and free healthcare because of bureaucratic restrictions (e.g. demand for proof of address). Furthermore, coercive measures to control public space, such as the banning of begging and enforcement of other sanitary/public health provisions and civil laws had the legal impact of criminalising homelessness.

Theodorikakou et al (2013) further developed the discussion of how Greece's homeless population became more diverse post the financial crisis, identifying three groups (p206):

1. Those experiencing a combination of unemployment and low income with other factors such as mental health issues, addiction, lack of social support, whose homelessness may be long term.
2. The 'new homeless', whose circumstances were a consequence of sudden change to previous relative security, directly related to the financial crisis and economic restructuring.
3. Immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in transition who faced an intense housing crisis, often with long periods in temporary/inadequate accommodation.

Early recognition that the 'new homeless' had been relatively socially integrated and could be a group where self-help strategies may be appropriate, appears to have shaped the Athens model of policy development and service provision.

Emerging issues identified by Theodorikakou et al (2013) included the immediate problem of homelessness; the problem of tenants on low/precarious income; the problem of housing costs (renting and owning) and the lack of public housing and social infrastructure. The lack of an adequate state response meant that these issues were resulting in a process of deepening social polarisation (p208) with the example of a protest by homeless people in Athens in April 2013 (p209) as well as wider civil unrest as a consequence of increasing inequalities. Although the Greek crisis also resulted in the emergence of social solidarity movements, Theodorikakou et al (2013) have argued for the need for more than philanthropy or poverty relief, making the case for 'activating social reaction' which will support the building of a social state.

The ongoing turmoil in the Greek housing market is further illustrated by media reports of 'Zero-Euro rent' triggered by the dramatic decline in property rental and the high taxes in the property market. It is reported that some landlords informally agree that a tenant will cover only basic fixed costs (property tax collected through electricity bills, council tax and stamp duties, standard property tax and energy certificate) and the owner then declares a lower income from rents and pay less tax. While tenants may be able to access affordable housing (less than half a usual monthly rent) the state loses rental property tax (FEANTSA, 2013).

Reviewing the changing nature of homelessness in Greece, Stamatis (2012) argued for the need to re-evaluate homelessness policy and service provision to take better account of population changes (including migration), the high pressure on Athens city, concentrations of unemployment, and the changing level of poverty risk. Stamatis suggested that the characteristics of homeless people appeared similar in different types of welfare state, perhaps because these groups 'tend to fall through most forms of welfare safety net' (p13). Nevertheless, the problem of increasing homelessness in Greece required a national strategy/action plan which might usefully:

- Evaluate the operation of different service providers, including criteria for funding;
  - Manage provision to avoid duplication;
  - Coordinate research on homelessness and disseminate findings;
  - Represent Greece in international forums;
  - and
  - Participate in a national plan for social inclusion.
- (Stamatis, 2012, p14).

## 4. Athens homelessness policy and service provision model

### 4.1 Key players and services

#### Key players

Athens city has a population of 745,514, while that of the wider metropolitan area is 3,130,841. The city of Athens municipality is at the heart of the Athens model, but a range of other policy-making actors also have key roles in the distinctive Athens approach (Figure 3). This section provides an overview of homelessness policies and services provided directly by Athens Municipality with additional examples of activities of other key players. The section concludes by mapping Athens homelessness services in relation to Busch-Geertsema *et al*'s 2010 typology and drawing a preliminary analysis of the Athens model in advance of a more substantive comparative analysis in Section 5.

Figure 3: Policy actors in the Athens homelessness model

| Policy arena   | Key players; Influences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| European Union | European Commission and Parliament <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Troika financial assistance and associated structural programmes</li><li>• Social policies and associated funding programmes</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| National       | Greek national government <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National economic and policy context</li></ul> Greek Housing Network                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| City           | Athens Municipality structures for policy development and delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Political leadership from Mayor</li><li>• Funding advice from ADDMA development agency</li><li>• KYADA – Solidarity and Reception Centre</li></ul> NGOs operating in Athens Municipality, e.g., KLIMAKA, PRAKSIS, ARSIS, SHEDIA, KETHEA<br>Corporate institutions, foundations<br>Church and faith-based organisations<br>Civil society |

In its overview of social welfare programmes, Athens Municipality (2013) confirms that the economic and humanitarian crisis which affects a substantial proportion of the Greek population is most severe in Athens. The crisis resulted in an identifiable re-evaluation of personal values and the emergence of a spirit of solidarity and the active of corporations, foundations, and ordinary people from Athens or from abroad to support those most affected by the crisis. The Municipality has sought to build on this sense of solidarity and play a coordinating role in optimising its effect. The vision has been one of a broad social network of public institutions, supported by civil society which activates and brings together sponsors, supporters, donors, and volunteers in solidarity with the people of Athens. The Municipality is able to direct support through evidence-based and well-designed programmes for assistance.

Key operating pillars which have underpinned policy development and the delivery of the range of services discussed below included: dignity, transparency, modern operating methods, interface and reintegration. The notion of social integration/reintegration appears critical and can be identified as a feature of the Athens model which differentiates modern homelessness relief services from those of the past which were less likely to have an explicit concern with moving beyond basic poverty relief to supporting homeless people's reintegration into settled housing and wider social participation. Reintegration services have included street work; night shelters; and hospitality programmes

The political vision of the current Municipal authority appears quite different to previous political models where the State was envisioned as the sole service provider, delivering programs based on its own funds and resources. Previous approaches could be characterised as introverted, exclusive and failing to seek and harness synergy with other key players. The current Athens model is much more explicitly collaborative, seeking to harness the dynamism of the full range of potential contributors to policy and service provision.



## Service provision

At the core of Athens service provision is **KYADA**, a municipal institution which helps the most vulnerable groups and aims to prevent factors which result in poverty, exclusion and social marginalization. These can be interpreted as relatively ambitious high-level goals, given the extent of the economic crisis. KYADA operates as the city's Solidarity and Reception Centre, with a remit to develop new programmes and preventive mechanisms and to providing dignified non-discriminatory support. KYADA also has a brief to carry out research and analysis, indicating a rational, evidence based approach to policy making and service development. The centre has been operating since 2005, developing social action plans as part of a coordinated strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion.

KYADA programmes planned and implemented by the City of Athens aim to tackle problems faced by people who, for whatever reason, cannot afford a shelter or whose home is unsafe and inadequate. The centre also seeks to develop mechanisms to prevent homelessness and to monitor cases of homeless individuals so as to ensure their eventual resettlement and social reintegration. Specific aims for 2011-2014 included:

- Care of people in need of food and shelter.
- Reorganise policies for homeless citizens living within the Municipality of Athens and create a viable strategy.
- Identify the needs of the homeless population.
- Provide psychological and social care services and support for homeless people and all people in need especially for people who face welfare issues, due to the crisis
- Provide support and prevent further deterioration of those who were mostly affected by the current economic crisis (nouveau-poor), via tailor made newly developed social welfare programmes

A range of services are provided by or through KYADA (Municipality of Athens, 2013), some of which have been monitored by the municipality as indicated below.

### *Social Grocery*

The KYADA centre works with a major supermarket on the Social Grocery initiative, which allows families in difficult financial situations to obtain grocery items free of charge. This programme is not for homeless people, but aims to support people 'within their home' and prevent further deterioration of their circumstances. Operation of the social grocery is guided by a set of rules drawn up by the City of Athens, with applications for assistance examined by the Board of Directors of the KYADA. There are conditions for acceptance of the applications and beneficiaries have certain obligations that they must follow to continue to benefit from the service. The social grocery has operated since 2007, with 400 households per annum receiving free food every week for 6 months (clients can choose what they need, to an average of 200 euros worth/month). The long term sponsor is a supermarket chain which provides both goods and staff.

Research conducted in 2013 on the use of the social grocery analysed 774 applications (2026 individuals).

- The largest number of applications was from single people, but there were also some large households.
- 75% were Greek (the rest comprised Greek origin, Albanian, Romanian, Other).
- 76% were unemployed; 17% retired; 7% employed.
- 77% of unemployed applicants were not eligible for any state benefit
- The last semester of 2013, KYADA received 1756 applications, the highest ever, out of which, support was provided to 200 applicant households.

(Municipality of Athens, 2013, 2014)

### *Social Pharmacy*

The social pharmacy provides free drugs and medicines to those excluded from the medical care system or who cannot pay the minimum required contribution. The programme was designed and initially operated by a volunteer pharmacist in collaboration with a municipal medical care centre. The social pharmacy aims to provide medical treatment to people living in extreme poverty in order to improve their welfare and social rehabilitation. Assistance is provided to those without health insurance until they acquire insurance or social welfare assistance. The project emerged from joint action between KYADA, the Municipal Surgeries of the City of Athens, the National Organisation of Pharmaceuticals, the Attica Pharmaceutical Association and World Pharmacists.



### ***Solidarity to Families***

The families programme was designed by the municipality as part of a broader strategy to tackle severe social welfare problems in the city, and launched in May 2012. A privately owned building was donated by the American legion and restored with the help of sponsors. The programme provides material, social, psychological and medical support to families whose lives have deteriorated dramatically in the economic crisis. It seeks to help them deal with their changed status and to empower them to gain back active control of lives as soon as possible. The programme contributes to relieving social pressure and maintaining social cohesion. Material support is available on a weekly basis, including food, clothing, household items, toys etc., and trained workers offer social, psychological and health support. Goods are offered by sponsors while care is delivered by the scientific/professional KYADA team, and support is available to all household members. The programme is not necessarily for households in danger of losing their homes, but rather for groups affected by unemployment (e.g. construction workers, electricians) who previously were able to provide for their families, but have been adversely affected by the economic crisis.

From municipality-provided photos, the facilities appear modern and good quality, delivered in a pleasant environment. Each year 212 households receive support with food, clothes, household and personal care for 6 months. The Municipality considers this programme as a positive example of combining Corporate Social Responsibility and Local Authority expertise for enhanced results.

Survey data from the meal provision centre ("Soup kitchen") during April/May 2013 reveals that:

- 66% of beneficiaries were Greek citizens, more so at the noon meal than later in the day
- 70% were male, 41% first attended in last 6 months, but 32% had been attending for more than a year.
- 74% were 'single' or had no obvious family support
- 77% were unemployed and 76% had no income (with 11% receiving minimum income)
- 90% of foreign beneficiaries reported having no income
- 73% of Greek beneficiaries had been more than 2 years unemployed
- 68% of Greek unemployed were not registered at the national employment agency

### ***Soup Kitchen***

Although the term 'Soup Kitchen' would be considered a somewhat old fashioned label in the English language, it is acknowledged that such a service makes an important contribution to those in need in contemporary Athens. Operating since 1999, the Athens soup kitchen provides two meals a day, to 1000 people, all year round.

### ***Streetwork Team***

The Streetwork team was introduced in 2013 to systematically research the experiences of those who were street homeless in Athens. The proactive outreach to the homeless population aimed to better understand and meet their needs, also to support, empower and mobilise them towards reintegration, indicating a modern approach to outreach work. Teams including a social worker and medical assistant undertake outreach

work twice a day every day to map the location, profile, and needs of homeless people and to build trust and inform them about programmes and services. Take up of day services is encouraged with the aim of assisting people to move off streets and into the 'hospitality programme' as a first step to re-integration. This programme focuses strictly on people living on the streets (it does not include, for example, people living in inadequate conditions, or immigrants that may have occupied empty buildings as a place to live).

Data collected on the streetwork services during June-August 2013 revealed:

- 480 individuals interviewed (total street population estimated at 1000)
- 77% were male, 23% female
- Only 3% were aged 25 or younger; 27% were 26-35years; 26% were 36-45 years; 23% were 46-55 years; only 15% were aged 56-65 and only 5% were 66years or older.
- Only 8% self-reported bad health, but nearly 60% self-reported addiction to drugs or alcohol.
- The main reasons why people were living on the streets included: lack of money (54%); no family (21%); don't know/can't say (19%); choice (6%).
- 49% reported engaging in begging activity
- 54% declared they did not wish to have access to shelters/hospitality programmes
- 45-50% said they needed support with food, clothes, and bathing.
- 20 people joined the night shelter in the 3 month period; 9 asked to join the longer term hospitality programme; 7 stayed in the shelter; and 4 out of 20 were considered 'reintegrated into social fabric'.
- In relation to the hospitality programme (which is not offered to homeless substance abusers, because of the lack of skilled resources to take care of their needs), 91 of the interviewed people stated they would consider a hospitality programme.
- The municipality was exploring the possibility of working alongside addiction specialists to jointly introduce a shelter and programme for those addicted to substances.

### *Hospitality programme*

This offers short-term emergency accommodation in a 'complex' donated to the city by an individual (room, private bathroom, three meals a day) and a city centre hotel which KYADA rents. Up to 130 guests were accommodated (2013 data) and also offered medical, social and psychological support; social activities; networking and volunteering opportunities; and reconnection with family and friends. In addition KYADA has developed a *Homeless Theatrical Team* to mobilise and empower the hospitality guests. The team is coached by a professional actor and perform for other guests, friends, in community settings and in public, and the municipality considers the initiative to have been very successful in engaging with hospitality programme clients.

Reintegration of clients into mainstream society is supported by a wider range of Social Services including: counselling and information; psycho-social support; social-welfare advice for hostel guests (issuing of pension and healthcare booklets, benefits and pensions etc.); social rehabilitation (referrals to clinics, senior citizens homes etc.); distribution of clothing; creation of mutual support teams; and mobile teams who offer street help. The Athenian Market centre distributes clothing and shoes to poor people or people hosted in the hospitality programme.

In addition to the above municipality services, a number of NGOs, provide services in the city and some of their activities are described below.

### **ARSIS**

ARSIS is a social NGO founded in 1992 focusing on youth homelessness, as well as providing a shelter for asylum seekers. ARSIS offers housing, legal and psychosocial support. In its work with young people in socially disadvantaged groups, ARSIS develops new methods and tools for youth support, organizes and participates in networks for social solidarity, cooperates with public and private services and promotes improved methods for the social policy of youth and children. In terms of employability and active inclusion of youth, ARSIS have the following objectives:

1. Working with the unemployed individually and in groups to build confidence, get in touch with their interests and talents, create a CV, and provide coaching on job search and interview techniques
2. Creating a network of employers that can support ARSIS' work
3. Working towards the improvement of employment policies and strategies.

### **KETHEA**

The KETHEA rehabilitation and social reintegration network provides free services to substance users/those with other addictions, and their families on the streets and in prisons and rehabilitation units. Facilities include a direct access centre, street work programme, substance-free club, support to join a therapeutic community, and diagnostic health centre.

### **KLIMAKA**

The NGO KLIMAKA co-ordinates a number of projects in the Athens municipality (and other areas). Within the programme 'Social Structures for the Combat of Poverty' activities include a day care center for homeless persons, a social pharmacy, a social grocery, a shelter, a garden farm, and an open day care centre. KLIMAKA also has activities to manage surplus food and meals for the benefit of socially vulnerable groups (targeted mainly at homeless persons) including awareness raising campaigns on the issue. KLIMAKA also has two projects linked to 'Integrative Local Action for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups' for which homeless persons are included in the target population. Activities include counselling, training, and work placements for beneficiaries of the projects; and transnational exchange of best practices within a general framework of social economy and social entrepreneurship.

### **PRAKSIS**

PRAKSIS is an independent NGO providing a wide range of services to vulnerable groups in Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras and Mitilini. The Greek abbreviation PRAKSIS refers to Programmes of Development, Social Support and Medical Cooperation. PRAKSIS situates its work in the context of the Greek financial crisis, where official unemployment exceeded 28%, but could be as high as 60% for the 16-25 year age group. The risk of poverty and social exclusion was among the highest in Europe, reported at 43% for single adults with dependent children in 2011, with 2/3 of households having an annual income below €18,000 (PRAKSIS, 2014). Official ELSTAT statistics revealed that the poverty threshold line for a four member family had dropped from €15073, in 2011 to €11946 in 2013, indicating a significant decrease in household disposable income suffered.

### *A Positive Aspect in a Negative Environment.*

A key strand of PRAKSIS' contribution to the Athens homelessness model is its programme in collaboration with the philanthropic foundation Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). The Greek title of programme translates to 'A Positive Aspect in a Negative Environment' and it is funded from part of SNF's commitment of €100m towards relief of the consequences of the economic crisis, which was recognised as deeper and longer lasting than anticipated. The initiative is also supported by other Foundations (e.g. Bodossaki, Leventi, Latsi) and the Soros foundation is also developing a solidarity programme.

The PRAKSIS model combines financial assistance and advice to families to sustain a home (prevention) and day centres for homeless people (relief). Crisis intervention also includes street work teams, advice and referrals to the mainstream welfare system, employment support, medical care, personal case management and practical day services (food, laundry etc.).

Up to 150-200 service users make daily use of both day centres.

- From PRAKSIS photos, the services appear modern, of a good quality, and provided in a pleasant environment.
- PRAKSIS recorded 3774 day centre beneficiaries in 2012-13, mostly single people (60%). 45% were roofless; 30% in insecure housing; 21% in inadequate housing; and 4% houseless.
- PRAKSIS saw an increase in families during 2013-14, representing 32% of new entries, with singles people dropping to 45% of new entries.

Support for families through homelessness prevention (550 families per month) aims to support at least one parent (back) into employment and a return to dignity and independence. Applications are scrutinised by Social Workers, focusing on change in circumstances since the crisis. Those accepted sign a 'Moral' agreement for the support programme which includes a range of services (such as financial review and social and psychological support) over 3-6 months.

Data collected up to December 2013 indicated 1623 families on the programme:

- 73% were two parent households; 27% were one parent households
- More than 50% of parents were in the age range 35-45 years
- 67% had been unemployed for more than one year.
- 80% had debts on entering the programme and 84% had no debts on completion
- 100% were unemployed on entering and 50% were employed on completion.

The range of services provided within the Athens model can be mapped onto the 2010 typology of services for homeless people developed by Busch-Geertsema et al (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Typology of services for homeless people and those in immediate risk of homelessness**

| Service Type                                                                                                                | Example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Athens Model                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prevention services for households in immediate risk of homelessness                                                        | Services offering mediation in cases of domestic conflicts, assumption of rent arrears etc.<br><br><i>In the Athens model, this also includes 'non-residential' prevention services.</i>                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Municipality of Athens, Social Housing Programme (see <b>Next Steps</b> below)</li> <li>- KYADA Social Grocery</li> <li>- KYADA Social Pharmacy</li> <li>- PRAKSIS Family homelessness prevention</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Prevention services for households at risk, but no immediate risk of homelessness (new category emerging from Athens model) | Programmes supporting households facing serious welfare issues, who do however have a roof/home. By supporting them materially & socially, the risk of homelessness is lowered. These programmes do not target households at immediate risk of homelessness or offer systematic support such as mediation, legal advice, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KYADA Solidarity to Families</li> <li>- KYADA Citizens Solidarity Hub (see <b>Funding</b>, below)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Emergency accommodation for roofless persons                                                                                | Emergency shelters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Municipal night shelter</li> <li>- Medecins du Monde Night shelter</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Temporary accommodation for houseless persons                                                                               | Temporary hostels, supported or transitional housing, shelters for victims of domestic violence                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KYADA Hospitality programme</li> <li>- Municipality of Athens hostel for women-victims of domestic violence (recently launched).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Non-residential services for homeless and formerly homeless persons                                                         | Outreach services, day centres, advice services, health services, mobile food services, education, training and employment services, floating support for ex-homeless persons in permanent housing                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KYADA Solidarity to Families</li> <li>- KYADA Soup Kitchen</li> <li>- KYADA Streetwork team</li> <li>- KYADA Social Services</li> <li>- KYADA Athenian Market</li> <li>- PRAKSIS Day centre</li> <li>- Medecins du Monde Social Pharmacy</li> <li>- Archbishop of Athens churches providing daily meals</li> <li>- Emergency Units of General Hospitals</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Accommodation for other client groups that may be used by homeless people                                                   | Hotels, bed and breakfast, specialist support and residential care services for people with alcohol, drug or mental health problems                                                                                                                                                                                           | Specialist accommodation for people with substance abuse problems                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Mainstream services for the general population that may be used by homeless people                                          | Advice services, municipal services, health and social care services, welfare payment services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KYADA reintegration services make referrals to mainstream services</li> <li>- Municipal Health Clinic Network (7 clinics around Athens offer free medical services, prescriptions, etc.)</li> <li>- KYADA Citizens Solidarity Hub (see <b>Funding</b>, below)</li> <li>- PRAKSIS Polyclinic &amp; Mobile Units</li> <li>- PRAKSIS Day Centre</li> <li>- Médecins du Monde Polyclinic</li> <li>- SHEDIA: Employability;</li> <li>- National Centre For Social Solidarity (emergency phone line and shelters);</li> <li>- Voluntary groups;</li> <li>- Solidarity for all (spontaneous initiatives at local level providing support).</li> </ul> |
| Specialist support services for other client groups that may be used by homeless people                                     | Psychiatric counselling services, drug detoxification facilities, services for former offenders, services for vulnerable young people                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ARSIS Employability services for disadvantaged young people.</li> <li>- KLIMAKA (mental health disorders)</li> <li>- KETHEA (substance users)</li> <li>- OKANA (substance users)</li> <li>- Babel (cross cultural psychiatric sessions; apartments for asylum seekers with mental health disorders)</li> <li>- EPANODOS (ex-offenders support)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

Source: Amended from Busch-Geertsema et al (2010, p44) with addition of Athens data from local agencies.



## 4.2 Mobilising funding and support

The Athens model offers two key innovations in funding for peer review: the use of a development agency (ADDMA) to access EU funding to tackle homelessness and the encouragement of funding/donations through corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social solidarity, developed by both the municipality and NGO PRAKSIS. The contribution of private foundations is also an important element of the Athens model. Corporations like Stavros Niarchos, and others, have been associated with the development of the corporate social responsibility dimensions of the Athens model.

In addition, EU Structural Funds have been obtained with the support of Greek national level funding mechanisms. These have enabled eight municipality level service structures including day centres and shelters for homeless people. Funds were obtained through a competitive tendering process with 11 municipalities (including Athens) applying for day centres and night shelters. The tender call provided the opportunity to comment on gaps in existing programmes and staffing/human resource levels allocated to programmes was identified as one area of where the Athens model might usefully be strengthened.

### Athens municipality ADDMA agency – mobilising EU funds

The municipality of Athens created the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA) as an intermediary management company for EU funds for the period 2007-2013  
<http://www.developathens.gr/en>

ADDMA has a wide brief including the strengthening of competitiveness, the improvement of citizens' quality of life, the revitalization of the urban fabric, social reconstruction, and ensuring sustainability of its programmes. Staff in ADDMA have developed expertise on EU funding and utilise European financial resources and tools with the objective of the effective management of the social crisis. The current volatility of the economic environment has been a driving force behind initiatives to reverse the capital city's negative publicity by highlighting its positive attributes and ADDMA has designed a comprehensive 10-year Development Programme. The main pillars of the programme are combating poverty and social exclusion and ensuring social cohesion. As part of its strategy, ADDMA has developed targeted actions aimed at fighting unemployment, promoting social inclusion and supporting socially vulnerable groups with special attention to the homeless, immigrants, the Roma, and released prisoners. In parallel, ADDMA is investing in the development of the social economy and social entrepreneurship as well as corporate social responsibility initiatives. Within this framework, a number of programmes have been implemented with comprehensive interventions for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market, as well as social welfare programmes for combating poverty, and a preventive network in primary health care.

In April 2012, the Municipality of Athens, signed a Cooperation Agreement for €120 million with the Government Ministries of Development and Labour, for the implementation of programmes in ADDMA's Development Strategy. ADDMA is now active as an Intermediate Body (IB) of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007-2013, managing projects which are co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) amounting to €85 million. In Greece, the NSRF constitutes the reference document for the programming of European Union Funds at national level for the 2007–2013 period, which ensures assistance from the Funds is consistent with EU strategic guidelines (Hellenic Republic, 2007). ADDMA also aims to utilize other financial instruments (e.g. JASMINE, JESSICA) to more effectively achieve its development priorities. The exchange and utilisation of best practice at a European and international level is a key instrument in implementation of the development strategy and ADDMA participates in international and European programmes (INTERREG, LIFE, URBACT, etc.) whose goal is international and European networking and the exchange of expertise and best practices.

ADDMA employs specialist staff and works closely with the private and public sector and a network of associates throughout Greece. In order to stimulate entrepreneurship and competitiveness of the local economy, the strategic priority is to invest in those sectors in which the city's local economy enjoys a comparative advantage. Social entrepreneurship plays a special role in the promotion of competitiveness and in ensuring social cohesion and the promotion of social innovation.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility: Athens Municipality KYADA Citizens Solidarity Hub**

This programme was launched in July 2012 to tackle poverty and social marginalization and with a target to become a hub to connect those who wish to show solidarity with those in need of support. The Hub accepts donations from a wide range of people (numbering in the 1000s), and more than 100 corporations and institutions. The Municipality developed a logistics and warehousing system to match offers with needs and reports 14,000 registered beneficiaries (including 2,900 children) who are provided with food, toys, clothes etc. An example of the Mayor's commitment to tackling poverty and social marginalization caused by the crisis, the Hub was designed by his team and operates under KYADA. The concept embraces:

- Effective and decent support to vulnerable and excluded Athens residents;
- Strengthening the growing solidarity movement and helping people realise aspirations;
- Building networks and promoting co-operation amongst citizens and institutions;
- Providing key social services to maintain social cohesion.

Beneficiaries can include anyone residing in Athens in a state of poverty (defined using thresholds of €7000/year for a single person and €12,000/year for families). The demand for services and the level of need continues to grow and the Hub aims to build allegiances to deliver a sustainable flow of goods to support 13,000 people in need with a 'decent monthly package'. Although this initiative focuses on donation of goods, these are valued at around €3.7m per annum, representing a significant mobilisation of corporate responsibility and citizen solidarity. The Hub is seeking to encourage foundations, corporations and individuals to help expand the portfolio of goods and also aims to host NGOs on premises, to provide additional services (e.g. health, legal, employment advice, activities for children). The Municipality considers the Citizens Solidarity Hub to be a successful programme in terms of activating and engaging citizens, institutions and corporations to solidarity and support (Municipality of Athens, 2013).

Most recently the Hub programme has been extended through a €2million EEA Grant (the funding mechanism of the member states of the European Economic Area: Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein). Athens municipality designed, submitted and got approval for the programme 'Tackling Poverty and Social Marginalisation' the two basic pillars of which are:

- a) Distribution of 43,700 food vouchers, worth €40 each, to 3,717 households to obtain food and other items they need most from the store of their choice, and
- b) The formation of an additional team of professional street-workers who will target and actively outreach the street population with drug addiction needs in Athens

(Municipality of Athens, 2014).

### **Corporate Social Responsibility: PRAKSIS NGO model**

PRAKSIS' reputation as a reliable organisation which delivers appears to sustain confidence of collaborating partners which is key to overcoming the consequences of the financial crisis (PRAKSIS, 2014). More than 50 Corporate Social Responsibility partners provide support through: provision of electric equipment and laptops; funding of medical equipment; and provision of a range of clothing and household goods etc. Solidarity through support activities, donations in kind, and volunteers is also recognised (involving more than 30 organisations, including Athens municipality) and PRAKSIS receives some international support.

PRAKSIS' strategy of support, involvement and engagement stresses the importance of raising public awareness of the changing profile of those who experience poverty and homelessness in Greece and promotes projects/services available to those in need:

'The magnitude of the Greek financial crisis and its consequences require multiple partnerships and synergies and the strong involvement of both the private sector and civil society. Close collaboration and cooperation and the creation of a dedicated network of supporters are the factors that will ensure the sustainability of important programmes for as long as it is required. Advocacy of all decision-making entities is also an essential component of engaging the state to initiate affordable solutions that respect the dignity and fundamental rights of its citizens' (p77).

### 4.3 Next steps

As the impact of the international economic crisis and Greek restructuring programme continued, Athens City developed a range of partnerships with respect to homelessness services:

- Collaboration with Athens' largest hospitals
- Cooperation with state and private agencies, aimed at the social and professional reintegration of homeless people.
- Participation in training seminars within Greece and abroad.
- Participation in the Greek network supporting the right to shelter.

(HABITACT, 2012).

By December 2013 the Municipality reported that the national economic crisis has put extreme pressure on the city of Athens as a result of a severe cut in the budget from central government (Municipality of Athens, 2013). The city had seen a significant increase in needs for social services with official unemployment at 27%, 5 years of deep recession, and mortgages that could not be supported. Although such issues were also national issues, they tended to be magnified in Athens as the capital city, at times resulting in social unrest. Nonetheless, the city had decided to strengthen the local social safety net as more people looked to them for support. This was achieved by opening up, activating and engaging civil society, mobilising forces to a common cause and preserving social cohesion. Mechanisms included establishing a network and enhancing collaboration with NGOs and socially responsible corporations, foundations and institutions as well as optimising use of EU funding (utilising expertise of ADDMA). New services were designed to tackle the new socio-economic reality, including the citizens' solidarity hub and solidarity for families.

Service providers have acknowledged that the Athens model is relatively weak in terms of programmes for special sub-groups amongst the homeless population, most specifically those with drug, alcohol and mental health needs. Consideration was being given to provision of safe, medically supported rooms for drug use and a shelter for homeless people with drug addiction related needs, although there is some concern that conservative elements of society and political parties remain opposed to such strategies.

Most recently, the municipality has launched a social housing programme in collaboration with NGO Humane Humans. This will provide 14 apartments located downtown Athens, rented by the municipality and equipped by the NGO to host households who are currently in a precarious housing state. Municipal Social Services are responsible for setting the vulnerability criteria, hosting the application procedure, reviewing the applications, and selecting the beneficiaries (Municipality of Athens, 2014).

Having set out the key elements of homelessness policy and service provision in Athens, some preliminary evaluative comments are presented, prior to a more detailed comparison against the international research evidence base.

A core characteristic of the Athens approach is that the municipality leads in terms of policy development and service provision, supported by the contribution of NGOs. This can be characterized as a collaborative model of governance which involves leadership from the public authority and strong partnership with NGOs. The Greek national government does not appear to have a strong policy-driving role (compared to other EU countries such as Denmark, Finland or Scotland). The weaker role of central government may have implications for policy development with service more locally accountable (or lacking in central government support).

The Athens model provides a wide range services to alleviate homelessness which are similar to many other countries. These include integrated social/health services for street homeless people and, importantly, services to support training/employability and a return to work. While the housing dimension of the Athens homelessness programme appears weaker, there are some preventative initiatives seeking to achieve early intervention to help those whose financial circumstances change suddenly avoid losing their home.



While the overall programme may not yet be sufficient to resolve the scale of the problem, policy and service provision are developing in positive directions in line with acknowledged practice. There remains a need to develop more long-term thinking on housing solutions and a clearer integrated policy framework. The main focus for the peer review process is intended to be policy-making, but available information has provided relatively richer data on service provision, albeit that is a central component of policy implementation. The peer review discussions might usefully place greater emphasis on the policy making process.

With regard to policy evaluation, initial data collection exercises provide a useful basis for service monitoring but have been relatively descriptive so far. There is scope to develop a more critical analysis of survey findings. The extent of involvement of homeless people in the policy making process and design of these services appears very limited, although many services do have empowerment of service users as a goal. While research on service provision has provided useful data on the profile of service users and some outcomes, there appear relatively few clear mechanisms to incorporate direct feedback from service users into any review process.

Effectiveness of the collaborative approach does suggest a degree of mutual respect across the state, private and NGO sectors, compared to, say, competition and distrust in the neoliberal model, such as in the UK. This appears to be a relatively recent accomplishment, overcoming mistrust across a significant element of political parties, the media and civil society. While the legal framework under which NGOs operate in Greece is somewhat loose, this may actually have helped facilitate collaboration.

The municipality reports success in developing a solidarity approach but if a high proportion of people are affected by the crisis (one third of the population?) there may be a limit to how far this approach can be developed. PRAKSIS presents an interesting case study of an NGO partnership based on corporate social responsibility, but offers less direct discussion of collaboration with the municipality. Further investigation might usefully explore the extent to which PRAKSIS and KYADA are implementing similar strategies in a productive collaboration, or whether there is actually some duplication of service provision? Evidence from local service providers suggests a funding philosophy where the triangle of State, Private Sector and Civil Society should coordinate efforts, adopting an evidence-based strategy to respond effectively to the increased demands on services resulting from the economic crisis and other factors driving homelessness. While some concern has been expressed at the lack of coordination among various actors, it is also important to recognise that NGOs and KYADA do run complementary services. Service providers have also identified a need to shift from emergency responses to longer term solutions and a co-ordinated approach would also help achieve this outcome.

With respect to enhancing funding for homelessness services, while ADDMA explicitly seeks to utilise EU funding programmes, the corporate responsibility initiatives appear more focused on mobilising public support and donations in kind. There may be scope to expand the revenue generation approach of ADDMA to other agencies and initiatives, as well as to further develop the potential role of private foundations in funding homeless services.



## 5. The Athens Model in Comparative European perspective

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This section draws on a prior review of homelessness policy and service provision (Anderson, 2010) to compare aspects of the Athens homelessness model against the international research evidence base. The governance of homelessness services has received increased attention in relation to analysis of the changing nature of welfare provision and the identification of new ways of steering service provision, as well as direct state intervention. Governance analysis seeks to capture the increasingly complex structures of interaction between public and non-government stakeholders. This paper adopts Benjaminsen *et al*'s (2009) use of 'governance' in a broad sense of how homelessness services are delivered in different countries and by whom. The Athens model suggests such a 'steering' role for the municipality, albeit combined with some direct service provision. It raises new questions of the role of local leadership in local policy development, as well as the extent to which local policy makers can deliver new approaches, such as facilitating corporate social responsibility, without any strong leverage from the central state.

### 5.1 Who provides homelessness services?

Edgar *et al* (1999) identified a Europe-wide recognition of the need to tackle homelessness, and an increased role for the NGO sector rather than the state for service delivery. At that time, Greece was identified as a country where state funding was only recently emerging. While the emergence of a strong NGO sector might have been a predicted development for Greece, the Athens model does suggest that the local state has an equally important role in co-ordinating policy and developing coherent strategy across the local area. The Athens model fits with other identified trends in the governance of homelessness services across Europe, such as increased decentralisation and regional autonomy; an enabling rather than providing role for local authorities; and additional reliance on NGOs to provide services.

Both capital and revenue finance are required to develop comprehensive programmes to prevent and alleviate homelessness and organisational structures have to adapt to changing financial pressures. The Athens model begins to document a strategy which is at least seeking to build corporate financial contribution to welfare through encouraging a solidarity/social responsibility approach and new research could usefully explore this notion in more detail in a comparative context.

Edgar *et al* (2003) identified some distinct national characteristics in homelessness policy and practice across five countries. Austria was characterised by bottom-up development and regional diversity but with a strong umbrella organisation. In Finland a strong role for municipalities also resulted in diversity while in Greece a lack of resources meant only fragmented service development. Portugal had experienced a shift away from church-based services and gradual growth in state involvement while the UK had seen a shift from a strongly housing-led approach to a more integrated approach embracing the provision of support services. Fitzpatrick and Stephens (2007) identified national funding streams for homelessness in seven of nine EU countries studied. In most cases, municipalities were enablers, but in Germany, Sweden, England and Hungary they were also direct providers of services for homeless persons. In France and the Netherlands, direct homelessness service provision was reported as negligible, despite both of these countries having significant social housing sectors. In Spain and the Czech Republic, municipalities had no major role as either providers or enablers. The 2014 Athens model would suggest progress in moving from a fragmented model of responding to homelessness, to a more co-ordinated approach, albeit in response to unprecedented economic restructuring which had a particularly severe impact on the capital city.

Olson and Nordfelt (2008) analysed how variation in Swedish municipal approaches impacted on services for homeless people. The social democratic system was strongly connected to employment and earned income and homelessness services were the responsibility of local authorities under the Social Services Act (2001), rather than a national entitlement through National Insurance. The Athens model has also incorporated an employment reintegration strategy for both homelessness prevention and alleviation.

Homelessness emerged as a social issue in the 1990s in Central European countries, but policy responses were generally slow to develop (Hradecký, 2008; Filipović-Hrast *et al*, 2009). While a non-profit sector emerged, impact was variable across countries. Filipović-Hrast *et al* (2009) found that the majority of homelessness services were delivered by NGOs in Hungary while they played more of a complementary role to public service providers in Slovenia. In both Slovenia and Hungary, a more integrated and complex approach to providing homelessness services was evolving although this had not yet developed into formal homelessness strategies in either country. Again the Athens model may be useful in confirming the important role for the local state in both formalising homeless policy and shaping more comprehensive, coherent approaches to service delivery.

NGOs providing services for homeless people in Europe are generally non-profit organisations (charities), rather than commercial (for profit) providers. Both faith-based and secular NGOs are active in homelessness service provision with distinctions between the two approaches narrowing in some countries (Johnson and Fitzpatrick, 2009). Private sector provision tends to be more common simply as a source of housing for those moving out of homelessness. The Athens model provides further examples of intervention to make more effective use of private sector housing options, but takes the strategy of mobilising private sector input further through its promotion of solidarity and corporate social responsibility approaches to donations in kind and income generation.

## **5.2 Homelessness services: funding, regulation and competition**

Edgar *et al* (2003) identified the state as increasingly a purchaser of services through competitive contracts with standards ensured through regulation. Despite growth in voluntary sector provision, organisational stability could be affected by reliance on a range of funding sources, an overall lack of resources, and the short-term nature of funding and these issues may well affect the 2014 Athens model. Post-2004, funding was reported as limited in the Czech Republic (Hradecký, 2008) while the EU's EQUAL initiative was utilised to develop service provision in Poland (Wygnańska, 2008). In Slovenia and Hungary, financial dependence on public resources also limited the activities of NGOs (Filipović-Hrast *et al*, 2009). The Athens model of drawing on the expertise of a wider municipal development agency (ADDMA) to optimise access to EU funding for homelessness and reintegration programmes may be useful for other European cities and countries.

Wolf and Edgar (2007) concluded that most homelessness services in Europe remained the responsibility of the central state or local government and procurement rules drove improvement in quality of services. However, Dyb and Loison's (2007) comparison of Norway and France found that competition in welfare was not a core concept in either country. Anderson (2010) concluded that the governance of homelessness in Europe appeared to remain influenced by a combination of social policy goals as well as business-oriented approaches to service delivery, embracing the state and NGO sectors more than the private sector. The Athens Corporate Social Responsibility model may suggest greater scope for involvement of private sector involvement than has previously been reported.

## **5.3 Service co-ordination and interprofessional working**

The complexity of resolving homelessness has long necessitated co-ordination across housing providers, social services and health services; and between public authorities and NGOs. Forms of collaboration in different European countries are likely to reflect tenure patterns, the role of the voluntary sector, contracting arrangements and legislative structures. A review of collaborative service provision in Austria, Greece, Netherlands, Portugal and the UK (Anderson *et al*, 2005) suggested that service co-ordination was more common at local government planning level than at service delivery level. The 2013 Athens model appears to indicate at least some progress on collaborative working at service delivery level. Interprofessional working was particularly required in circumstances where, for example: specialist services may not be available or accessible; where complex/multiple problems fell outside of the scope of individual services; or where practices such as discharge from institutions left people vulnerable to homelessness (Anderson *et al*, 2005, pp6-7). The study questioned whether conceptual models for the evaluation of interagency working were adequate to keep up with the pace of development of activities on the ground – a conclusion which may merit further discussion in the peer review process.

Approaches to interagency working also reflected national approaches to homelessness (FEANTSA, 2004). Only in the Netherlands and the UK was interagency working significant and this reflected 'top down' policy drivers from central government (Anderson *et al*, 2005). In Greece and Portugal, interagency working was reported to be driven more by EU policy and Austria remained distinctive as its federal nature resulted in diverse approaches in different regions. Interagency working was more likely to occur where it was a condition of funding and change could impact on the sustainability of partnerships. Difficulties for homelessness services in collaborating with other sectors were identified due to unequal relations in terms of staffing, professionalism and resources. More recently, Slovenia and Hungary were also identified as seeking to address homelessness through integrated, cross-sector cooperation (Filipović-Hrast *et al*, 2009). The Athens 2014 model suggests that improved interagency working can be achieved without a strong 'top-down' drive from central government, where that collaboration is across municipal and NGO sectors (as opposed to directly with central state services).

## 6. Effectiveness of homelessness policy and service provision

### 6.1 Approaches to intervention

Homelessness research has been increasingly concerned with the relative effectiveness of different approaches to providing housing and support services. Edgar *et al* (1999) reviewed staged models of resettlement, some of which involved homeless people moving through different types of accommodation with different levels of support (staircase models). Constructed largely as a linear process, such models allowed for staged moves, but clients did not generally have full tenancy rights until they 'achieved' a move to a regular tenancy. This staged model was criticised as being too prescriptive in terms of assuming all individuals needed to make that type of transition (pp103-105). However, supported housing was still viewed as critical to successful resettlement (Edgar *et al*, 1999) recognising the importance of the overall ethos of a service as well as the model of housing and support.

Edgar *et al* (2000) found low levels of provision of supported housing across the EU, largely concentrated in large urban areas. They also noted that access to supported housing may be linked to an applicant's potential to move towards more independent living (as perceived by service gatekeepers), rather than to the needs of homeless people. Edgar *et al*, (2000, p165) concluded that while there was a positive role for supported housing there remained a need to address clarity of objectives, the restrictive nature of referral and allocation regulations, and the limitations imposed by some forms of funding and management. Better monitoring and evaluation of outcomes was also required, as well as an adequate supply of ordinary housing for people to move on to.

In their review of youth homelessness, Quilgars *et al* (2008) concluded that some transitional housing could be appropriate for younger people if tailored to their specific needs and with appropriate provision for moving on. However adult hostels have been criticised in terms of restrictions to physical, social and legal space. Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin (2007) argued that 'basic temporary accommodation has often been legitimised by the sheer need of desperate people for physical shelter' (p72) citing examples of new, large-scale hostels in Madrid and Paris (p73) and questioning why the provision of 'low threshold/high tolerance' accommodation was often of a low standard. The examples of Germany and Finland demonstrated success in reducing homelessness among families showing it was possible to almost eliminate the need for temporary accommodation (Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin, 2007) and in Scotland, Glasgow City Council closed all large-scale hostels, resettling residents in ordinary housing in the community, with support (Fitzpatrick *et al*, 2010).

Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin (2007, pp85-87) identified five situations where hostels might still be required:

1. Emergency accommodation for homelessness in a crisis
2. Where clients had a preference for a protected environment
3. For high tolerance accommodation (e.g. wet hostels) which people considered their home
4. For refuges for those fleeing violence in emergencies
5. For vulnerable young people still developing independent living skills.



In these circumstances, minimum requirements for privacy, space to socialise, protection from evictions, service standards, user involvement and public scrutiny should be fulfilled. Similarly, Fitzpatrick and Wygnańska (2007, p62) highlighted the need to pay more attention to the following elements of hostel provision:

- Staff treating residents with respect
- Ensuring residents felt safe (e.g. from bullying)
- Regulations not being unreasonable
- Reasonable protection from summary eviction
- Hostel resident involvement in management
- Effective resettlement from hostels and sustainability of follow on/mainstream accommodation
- Monitoring Standards in hostels and resident satisfaction.

The Athens 2014 model appears to have a different combination of strengths and weaknesses in terms of policy effectiveness. The model places a strong emphasis on integrative service provision designed to empower and support those facing homelessness to return to independent living (including returning to work and a reasonable earned income). However, many Athens services are not necessarily linked to accommodation, but could be delivered at street level, through day centres and the social grocery and pharmacy, as well as through accommodation based hospitality projects. This approach offered flexibility in terms of delivery of support services, but in comparison to other European cities and countries, the integration of sustainable, affordable housing solutions might be considered weak.

As various forms of temporary supported accommodation were increasingly criticised as ineffective in supporting exits from homelessness, the 'Housing First' approach developed in New York by the Pathways Agency has emerged as a potentially more effective model (Pleace, 2008; Tsemberis, 2010). Housing First focused on placing homeless people with addictions/other complex needs directly into permanent housing (emphasising consumer choice in housing) and separating housing from any prior requirement for treatment or lifestyle change. Support interventions were focused on harm reduction, and were open-ended and multi-disciplinary. Evaluation showed encouraging outcomes for tenancy sustainment and that the programme was cost effective, though evidence on the effectiveness of reducing mental health or addiction problems was less clear. Culhane (2008) cited evidence that support in ordinary housing was better value than shelter provision in the US, but the large-scale shelters from which quantitative data was collected are not typical of service provision in Europe. Atherton and McNaughton Nicholls (2008) also examined the US Housing First model, concluding that while national and local contexts were important for transfer to Europe, available evidence pointed strongly to the capacity of homeless people with complex needs to maintain an ordinary tenancy, with appropriate support as needed.

Benjaminsen *et al* (2009) identified the impact of the Housing First approach across the UK and the Nordic countries, demonstrating the exchange of knowledge through international networks. Individual governments interpreted Housing First in differing ways, but with a clear emphasis on outcomes such as reducing the use of temporary accommodation, reducing stays in shelters, providing long-term or permanent accommodation and providing individualised services and support. Tainio and Fredriksson (2009) expanded on how Finland was moving towards early provision of suitable accommodation, accompanied by appropriate tailored support services and access to mainstream health and welfare services. More detailed analysis of successful Housing First solutions was needed and the Finnish programme to reduce long-term homelessness (running to 2011) could provide useful evidence. Johnsen and Teixeira (2010) also reviewed international research on staged and Housing First approaches, including research from North America, Australia and Japan. While the economic and policy development circumstances in Athens may be some way from having the capacity to integrate settled housing solutions into the current model, the municipality may wish to consider how it may begin to shift policy and practice in this direction, in line with other European countries.

The debates around Housing First raise the question as to whether a 'pathways' approach to understanding homelessness suggests an extended linear model, but this is not the case. The pathways approach adopted by Anderson (2010) focused on supporting routes out of homelessness, with an effective pathway being as short as reasonably possible, taking account of existing service provision and the needs and preferences of homeless individuals and households.



**Figure 4: Possible pathways out of homelessness**

| Homelessness state                                                                          | Intervention 1                  | Intervention 2                  | Intervention 3                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Roofless/<br>Houseless/<br>Threatened with homelessness                                     | Emergency<br>accommodation      | Transitional<br>accommodation   | Settled accommodation           |
| Roofless/<br>Houseless/<br>Threatened with homelessness                                     | Emergency<br>accommodation      | Settled accommodation           |                                 |
| Roofless/<br>Houseless/<br>Threatened with homelessness                                     | Transitional<br>accommodation   | Settled accommodation           |                                 |
| Roofless/<br>Houseless/<br>Threatened with homelessness                                     | Settled accommodation           |                                 |                                 |
| <b>Comprehensive needs<br/>assessment and development of<br/>services /support package.</b> | <b>Service/support delivery</b> | <b>Service/support delivery</b> | <b>Service/support delivery</b> |

Figure 4 suggests that even where quality transitional accommodation exists, the maximum number of stages in a supported pathway out of homelessness need only be three, two might be more appropriate and the minimum or ideal could be just one (effectively equating to 'Housing First'). Transitional services to support pathways into ordinary settled housing should be integrated into all stages in a dynamic approach focused on moving from homelessness to having a home. Johnsen and Teixeira (2010) also concluded that transitional housing and Housing First were not mutually exclusive approaches and some 'staircase' models were effectively more like an 'elevator', enabling short-cuts to ordinary housing. The more substantive question remains around how individual clients choose, or are steered into, different models of provision. While current best practice does not encourage the development of new transitional accommodation, a flexible approach to utilising existing temporary options may be a useful starting point for better integration of settled housing solutions into the 2014 Athens model.

## 6.2 Homelessness Prevention

Preventing homelessness requires a broader range of advice and support services to help people access social and privately rented housing; to help sustain housing and prevent eviction; and for family/relationship mediation services. Evidence from both Germany and England has suggested that successful implementation of homelessness prevention contributed to overall reductions in homelessness (Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick, 2008). An emerging focus on prevention was also evident in the emphasis on reducing the number of evictions in the English, Norwegian and Swedish national homelessness strategies (Benjaminsen *et al*, 2009). Homelessness prevention services imply the aim of intervening as early as possible, to avoid a potential housing crisis. Assessment of the US Housing First approach does not so far appear to have highlighted that it remains a responsive, rather than a preventive approach. While Housing First may be an effective pathway out of homelessness, EU countries may well wish to give equal or greater priority to developing much earlier interventions to prevent homelessness and it is important to acknowledge that the Athens 2014 model has important preventative elements which seek to prevent families affected by economic restructuring from losing their homes.

## 6.3 Empowering service users to move out of homelessness

The empowerment of homeless households in choosing their pathways out of homelessness (both accommodation and support services) is a crucial point of interaction between structural constraints and the positive agency of individuals to influence effective solutions to homelessness. Edgar *et al* (1999) recommended individual-focused services, but case study national reports did not identify any significant redistribution of power from service providers to service users at that time (Edgar *et al*, 1999). Edgar *et al* (2000) concluded that the service user perspective in supported housing remained neglected and argued that empowerment should be a key principle underpinning housing, support and service provision to enable greater choice and control for clients. The empowerment of homelessness service users remains underdeveloped in Europe although evidence of increasing user involvement can be found in Denmark,

France, Hungary, the Netherlands and the UK (Busch-Geertsema *et al*, 2010). However, it should also be noted that the ability of homelessness service users to defend their interests is often inhibited by the transitional nature of homelessness in addition to a lack of resources, continuity and stability (Anker 2009). The Athens 2014 model indicates a goal to empower service users to achieve social reintegration and to move out of homelessness, but there is a lack of detailed analysis of the effectiveness of this strategy or of the direct involvement of homeless people in the policy making and service design processes. Next stages of development could usefully develop a more rigorous approach to service user involvement at all levels.

## 6.4 Evaluating Effectiveness Outcomes

Evaluation of homelessness policies requires agreed indicators of effectiveness which reflect success in clients moving out of homelessness, and could incorporate other positive outcomes such as gaining employment or family reconciliation. Research evidence raises both lessons and challenges for evaluating outcomes. The USA appears to have better developed quantitative data bases on homelessness and the effectiveness of interventions (Culhane, 2008). However, recording systems were better in some parts of the US than others and there could be legal and ethical issues in terms of managing data bases with a large amount of personal information. Flatau and Zaretsky (2008) evaluated relative improvements in outcomes for participants; the difference in cost between one programme and an alternative; and the overall effectiveness in terms of costs and outcomes. While acknowledging ethical issues, Flatau and Zaretsky (2008) concluded that robust quantitative evaluations and Randomised Control Trials could be implemented with respect to homelessness programmes, although in practice this was still mainly confined to the US. The balance between developing RCT approaches the ethics of respecting client rights, as well as meeting client needs could usefully be explored further in the European context.

The Athens model incorporates a research brief for the Municipality's main KYADA homelessness service and initial data collection exercises have provided valuable data on service users and some service outcomes. Next stages in the policy process may consider developing more sophisticated mechanisms for policy review and service evaluation. Guidance on evaluation of homelessness services and strategies has been produced for HABITACT (Pleace, 2013). Methods can incorporate both robust quantitative studies and 'softer' outcomes which acknowledge how service provision assists self-development for homeless people. Existing frameworks which could be drawn upon for the Athens model include, for example, the UK Outcomes Star or the Netherlands Self-Sufficiency Matrix (Pleace, 2013, pp45-521).

## 6.5 Service quality and standards

In line with the pathways out of homelessness approach adopted for this review, Wolf and Edgar (2007, p28) argued that the overall benefit of homelessness services should be understood as an improved quality of life of clients. They suggested (p21) that service regulation could lead to formalisation of standards and quality measurement. However, many EU countries had no national standards for services and in some cases standards were developed at regional or local level (p22). Scotland was noted as one country with a system of national regulation of homelessness services and the setting of Dutch standards in 2007 indicated how recent such developments were. The complexity of assessing outcomes and the perspective of service was acknowledged along with the need to look at longer-term methods of ensuring that services were delivering what customers needed (Wolf and Edgar, 2007). Although Norway had introduced quality agreements to hostels (Dyb and Loison, 2007), in most European countries residents still tended to have few rights of legal occupancy, remaining vulnerable to eviction (Fitzpatrick and Wygnańska, 2007). FEANTSA (2012) reported a general lack of information on quality of homelessness services in Greece. The Athens model suggests considerable modernisation in service development with reasonable quality of environment reflecting the relatively recent launch of some services (i.e. new premises and equipment etc.). It will be important for the municipality to give greater consideration to service quality and to monitor the ongoing quality of its service provision.

## 7. Questions for peer review

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The Athens homelessness model incorporates some previously neglected dimensions of policy. It explicitly recognises the relationship between poverty and risk of homelessness, and the significance of policies to promote the employability of service users as a route out of homelessness. However, there remains scope to further develop other dimensions such as service user involvement and housing-led solutions. The Athens model also recognises the potential contribution which the social economy can make to homelessness policy responses, for example, in relation to corporate social responsibility and employability. The main mechanism to harness the social economy sector was through the municipal development agency, ADDMA, although other emerging examples included the SHEDIA street paper and KLIMAKA's projects to achieve social integration through social enterprise activities.

Internationally, evaluation of homelessness policies and service outcomes has not been adequate and better documentation and analysis of service user voice and empowerment is required. The Athens model has gone some way to collecting core data on the homelessness population and this had fed directly into service development, but there has been less attention to evaluation of the effectiveness of these services.

Research evidence suggests very limited evaluation of co-ordination, partnership and inter-professional working. The Athens model demonstrated the centrality of the municipality taking a facilitating and co-ordinating role across a range of active policy agencies, in what appears as a positive collaboration of service providers. The collaborative approach demonstrates the benefits of networking across sectors which has helped Athens respond to the local consequences of the international crisis.

Research on homelessness prevention is required as part of the next phase in homelessness policy and strategy, further moving to a strategic, proactive, early intervention approach rather than a responsive approach. This would necessitate studies of the potential for much earlier intervention to avoid homelessness events, and there is scope for the Athens model to contribute to the homelessness prevention evidence base.

Careful consideration needs to be given to appropriate methods for comparing research findings. In Fitzpatrick and Wygnańska's (2007) comparison of hostels in the UK and Poland, the existence of a much greater body of research evidence in one country demonstrated the constraints of the comparative method within the EU. Recognising different institutional contexts in Germany and England, Busch-Geertsema and Fitzpatrick (2008) also cautioned against over simplistic comparisons and policy transfer. Initiatives such as HABITACT peer review can make a valuable contribution to evidence based policy transfer.

Johnsen and Teixeira (2010) make the important point that not only is the evidence base on service effectiveness limited, but that evaluation cannot keep up with changes in practice. This is likely to continue to be the case unless evaluation becomes a regulatory or legal requirement. Even where forms of monitoring and evaluation are linked to service funding, this does not necessarily provide robust comparative research evidence. Effective research and evaluation requires resources which are rarely under the control of potential researchers. The European Union, national governments and local agencies can seek to have positive influence over research agendas and resources for research.

The peer review discussions might usefully place greater emphasis on the policy making process, building on information about service delivery. Positive dimensions of the Athens model have included strong political will on the part of the city Mayor to respond to homelessness issues, and the peer review discussion could explore this role in more detail. For example, what were the drivers of strong political will in Athens and active citizenship? How were fund-raising strategies and Corporate Social Responsibility programmes developed? And how did Athens build networks of funders and persuade them to participate?

While the recognition of the importance of the social economy has been one dimension of supporting self-help approaches in homelessness policy, the emphasis on encouraging corporate and public social responsibility may have been at the expense of developing robust mechanisms to empower those who face homelessness in active self-help. Future policy developments might consider further development of a co-production approach which more effectively embraces the potential role of service users.



Promoting employability of homeless people has been a central strand of the Athens model and there may be other models which can promote active participation of homeless people in the mainstream labour market, self-employment, and volunteering. Peer review discussions might address the pros and cons of such a strategy in the current economic context of high unemployment.

Finally, discussions might focus on identifying the next stages in developing the Athens homeless policy model, which might equally assist in learning across participating cities:

- How might Athens achieve a shift away from emergency to long-term accommodation, and what barriers exist at service, policy and political levels?
- How can agencies develop realistic objectives and indicators to measure progress of homelessness prevention and reduction?
- How best can cities unlock the potential for EU funding to support local services, and for homelessness reduction?
- What use can be made of the European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived and the EaSI programme?

## 8. Conclusion

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EU member countries remain at differing stages in terms of the development of research, policy and practice on service provision for homeless people and drawing EU-wide conclusions risk over-generalisation and loss of in-country detail. Nevertheless, a few key trends emerged from the 2010 review: consensus on understanding the causes and complexity of homelessness; the complexity of changing governance; and perhaps most importantly, the emerging consensus around the delivery of support services in ordinary housing (Anderson, 2010). As Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin (2007, p67) argued 'an organised provision of mainstream housing, let with security of tenure and coupled with support when requested by residents is the only working solution to homelessness'. The emerging emphasis on ordinary housing and homelessness prevention in the post-2000 period seems to rightly re-state the fundamental requirement for secure housing, with the delivery of support services as required, as core to supporting people's pathways out of homelessness.

The period 1990-2010 saw significant progress in understanding and tackling homelessness, with a growing research evidence base to support developing policy and practice. The Anderson (2010) review was published as the crisis of neoliberalism which engulfed much of Europe in 2008 precipitated severe austerity programmes in many EU states, threatening achievements in tackling homelessness. The Athens 2014 homelessness model illustrates that continuing progress can be made in refining homelessness policy and practice, despite the severe challenges associated with the austerity environment. The creativity in policy thinking which was required to push forward innovative responses in the post-crisis environment has resulted in further new strands in the homelessness policy portfolio for continuing discussion and further refinement to better meet the needs of those facing homelessness.

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## Annex: ETHOS – European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion

|                     |            | Operational Category                                         | Living Situation                                                                                           | Generic Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conceptual Category | ROOFLESS   | 1 People Living Rough                                        | 1.1 Public space or external space                                                                         | Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters                                                                                                                             |
|                     |            | 2 People in emergency accommodation                          | 2.1 Night shelter                                                                                          | People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter                                                                                                                             |
|                     | HOUSELESS  | 3 People in accommodation for the homeless                   | 3.1 Homeless hostel<br>3.2 Temporary Accommodation<br>3.3 Transitional supported accommodation             | Where the period of stay is intended to be short term                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                     |            | 4 People in Women's Shelter                                  | 4.1 Women's shelter accommodation                                                                          | Women accommodated due to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term                                                                                                          |
|                     |            | 5 People in accommodation for immigrants                     | 5.1 Temporary accommodation / reception centres<br>5.2 Migrant workers accommodation                       | Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status                                                                                                                                            |
|                     |            | 6 People due to be released from institutions                | 6.1 Penal institutions<br>6.2 Medical institutions (*)<br>6.3 Children's institutions / homes              | No housing available prior to release<br>Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing<br>No housing identified (e.g by 18th birthday)                                                                                      |
|                     |            | 7 People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness) | 7.1 Residential care for older homeless people<br>7.2 Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people | Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)                                                                                                                                 |
|                     | INSECURE   | 8 People living in insecure accommodation                    | 8.1 Temporarily with family/friends<br>8.2 No legal (sub)tenancy<br>8.3 Illegal occupation of land         | Living in conventional housing but not the usual or place of residence due to lack of housing<br>Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy<br>illegal occupation of a dwelling<br>Occupation of land with no legal rights |
|                     |            | 9 People living under threat of eviction                     | 9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented)<br>9.2 Re-possession orders (owned)                                     | Where orders for eviction are operative<br>Where mortgagee has legal order to re-possess                                                                                                                                     |
|                     |            | 10 People living under threat of violence                    | 10.1 Police recorded incidents                                                                             | Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence                                                                                                                                      |
|                     | INADEQUATE | 11 People living in temporary / non-conventional structures  | 11.1 Mobile homes<br>11.2 Non-conventional building<br>11.3 Temporary structure                            | Not intended as place of usual residence<br>Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty<br>Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin                                                                                                      |
|                     |            | 12 People living in unfit housing                            | 12.1 Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation                                                               | Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations                                                                                                                                              |
|                     |            | 13 People living in extreme overcrowding                     | 13.1 Highest national norm of overcrowding                                                                 | Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms                                                                                                                                              |

Note: Short stay is defined as normally less than one year; Long stay is defined as more than one year.  
This definition is compatible with Census definitions as recommended by the UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006)

(\*) Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.



# **HABITACT PEER REVIEW 2014**

